

Financial Impact of Key Volunteer Roles in Core: Developing Financial Assistance Programs to Support Volunteerism

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Core

LEADERSHIP
INFRASTRUCTURE
FUTURES

ALA

American
Library
Association

ABSTRACT

Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures advances the profession of librarians and information providers in central roles of leadership, collections and technical services, preservation, and technology. Core is exploring the development of an application-based financial assistance program that will directly support individuals who are interested in volunteering with Core, but may face barriers that limit their ability to participate. This project aims to provide data on the investment people make as Core volunteers, so that Core can evaluate and create a volunteering scholarship program.

PHASE 1: FINANCIAL IMPACT STUDY

PROCESS

SURVEY

- Available from February 27 - April 21, 2025
- Distributed via 12 channels, including ALA Connect and various listservs
- Received 112 total responses

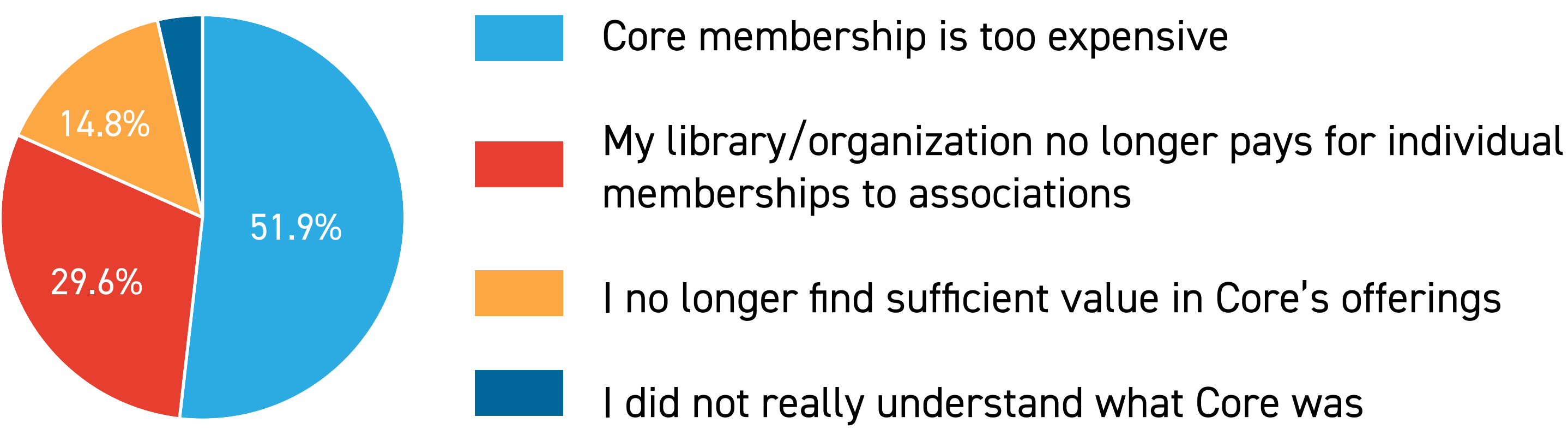
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Spoke with 6 people who had volunteered with Core
- 3 interviews conducted via Zoom, 3 via email correspondence
- 4 interviewees worked in academic libraries, 2 in public libraries, and 1 at a government agency

FINDINGS

The possibility of financial support is a key factor in engaging with Core.

What prevented you from staying with Core?



Conferences are the largest financial investment when volunteering with Core.

"The in-person conference attendance requirements are the biggest barrier for participation. My employer does not cover the full cost of such travel and registrations, and I am not willing to pay out of pocket."

Current Core volunteers often have institutional support for professional service.

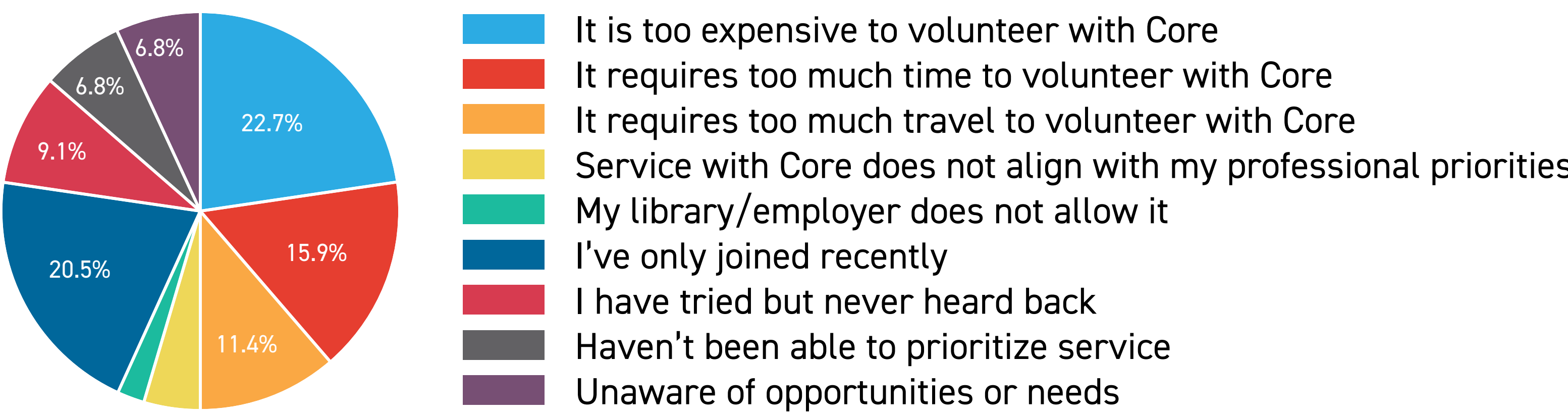
"I get \$2,500 a year for professional development ... So as someone who is well funded, \$2,500 covers one conference a year.... There is an expectation of leadership to attend at least Core Forum and ALA Annual – that's two conferences, which is more than my generous budget. I can't imagine for others."

Paying for multiple memberships remains a barrier to joining Core.

"I would be interested in being more involved with CORE and being able to join as a member but I also need to retain my ACRL membership. A joint fee for multiple divisions would be helpful."

The time required as a volunteer is a significant concern and barrier.

As a current member, why haven't you volunteered with Core?



Investment by volunteer role

ROLE	AVERAGE COST TO VOLUNTEER	AVERAGE HOURS SPENT PER MONTH VOLUNTEERING
Board Member	\$4,000.00	9
President	\$4,000.00	26
Section Leader	\$1,541.67	14
ALA Councilor	\$1,500.00	0
Board Intern	\$1,500.00	9
Committee Chair	\$1,319.44	12
Committee Member	\$1,069.18	5

PHASE 2: FUNDING MODELS FOR VOLUNTEER SCHOLARSHIPS

In developing funding scenarios for potential scholarships, we carefully reviewed the findings from our financial impact study, which span across potential volunteers' motivations, barriers, and circumstances.

NEED-BASED SUPPORT

Common feedback received was that (1) academic librarians often receive financial support for professional service from their employers and (2) people more advanced in their careers are often more able to volunteer as they can financially cover more expenses. Accordingly, scholarships to support volunteerism would be especially beneficial for people who do not receive sufficient institutional funding to volunteer with Core and who demonstrate a financial need for support.

IN-PERSON CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Since in-person event attendance incurs the highest costs, we recommend a careful evaluation of what events require in-person attendance for each volunteer role.

Proposed funding scenarios for potential scholarships, by role

VOLUNTEER POSITION	AVERAGE ANNUAL COST	IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE	PARTIAL FUNDING DUES	PARTIAL FUNDING STIPEND	FULL FUNDING STIPEND
President	\$4000.00	ALA Annual, Core Forum	\$610 (ALA + Core dues, presenter rates)	\$1,000	\$4,000
Board Member	\$4000.00	ALA Annual, Core Forum	\$610 (ALA + Core dues, presenter rates)	\$1,000	\$4,000
ALA Councilor	\$1500.00	Remote attendance	\$195 (ALA + Core dues)	\$500	\$1,500
Section Leader	\$1541.67	Remote attendance	\$195 (ALA + Core dues)	\$500	\$1,500
Committe Chair	\$1319.44	Varies by position	\$195 - \$470 (ALA + Core dues, presenter rates)	\$500	\$1,500
Committe Member	\$1068.18	Remote attendance	\$195 (ALA + Core dues)	\$250	\$1,000

PHASE 3: SPONSORSHIP PROPOSAL AND OUTREACH PLAN

There is great donor and sponsorship potential in supporting scholarship programs for Core volunteers, as the initiative has several elements that would be attractive to donors:

PERSONAL IMPACT

Tying donations to specific people often resonates with sponsors, as it puts a face to their donation.

WIDE VARIETY OF DONATION OPTIONS

This initiative will appeal to a large range of donors, as there are variable gift sizes.

EQUITY MINDED

At the heart of much of the feedback, there is an understanding that current volunteers are often restricted to the most well resourced Core members. Providing this granting opportunities will allow for more voices and perspectives to be heard at the highest levels of Core.

PROPOSED SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

- ◆ Diamond \$12,000
- ★ Platinum \$10,000
- ★ Gold \$8,000
- ★ Silver \$6,000
- ★ Bronze \$4,000

INDIVIDUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Core Leadership Scholarship - \$4,000. Support new voices leading Core by sponsoring a future Core President or Core Board Member.

Core Committee Scholarship - \$1,500. Advance the mission of Core, with work spanning across advocacy, engagement, and more, by sponsoring a committee chair or member.